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August 28, 2023

SunLine Transit Agency Named Outstanding Public Transportation System for 2023 by the American Public Transportation Association (APTA)

SunLine Takes Top Honors Among Agencies with 3 Million or Fewer Annual Passenger Trips by the Nation's Premier Transportation Association

(Thousand Palms) – The American Public Transportation Association (APTA) – North America's only association that represents all modes of public transportation with more than 1,500 public and private sector member organizations – has announced the winners of its 2023 APTA Awards, and SunLine Transit Agency received top honors being named the Outstanding Public Transportation System this year, among agencies with 3 million or fewer annual passenger trips.

"This is truly the most coveted award by transportation agencies across the country, so we are absolutely thrilled to be able to share this big news today," said Lisa Middleton, Board Chair of SunLine Transit Agency. "SunLine is known as an innovator and pioneer of clean fuels in the transit industry, but beyond that, our team is committed to delivering a variety of transit services to those in our community – providing the Coachella Valley with mobility solutions that get them where they need to go whether that be work, doctor's appointments or to pick up essentials like food and medications."

Prior to receiving this pinnacle of transit distinctions, SunLine also received the 2022 California Transit Association Agency of the Year Award, the 2021 Caltrans Excellence in Transportation Award, the 2021 Community Transportation Association of America Urban Transportation System of the Year Award and the 2021 Southern California Association of Governments Sustainability Award.

"We are proud to represent the region we serve as we are presented with this remarkable acknowledgement," said Mona Babauta, who recently took the helm as the Agency's new CEO/General Manager. "Being recognized at this level by our peers is worth celebrating among all who contribute to the successes achieved by SunLine Transit Agency."

Accomplishments contributing to this award include SunLine's leadership in sustainability and clean fuels as a cutting edge innovator in zero-emissions technology; its educational efforts through its development of the West Coast Center of Excellence in Zero Emissions Technology and Alternative Fuels; its commitment to enhanced safety including providing buses to serve as cooling centers for CALFire during wildfires, identifying bus stops with a high population of unhoused individuals to support Coachella Valley Association of Governments as it works to provide resources, and implementing a bus operator training program to raise awareness and identify the signs of potential human trafficking; the implementation of services that deliver convenience and flexibility for riders including the Haul Pass program that allows local high school and college students to ride for free as well as the SunRide microtransit service that provides on-demand rideshare transportation in specific Coachella Valley



zones; and outreach programs such as Fill the Bus, the Student Art Contest and Pack the Bus which enrich members of our community and those in need.

SunLine was one of just 14 organizations and leaders in North America to be honored in the 2023 APTA Awards, which provides this recognition to those who have demonstrated significant leadership and whose accomplishments and innovations have greatly advanced public transportation.

"The achievements and legacies of our awardees inspire us all to continue striving for excellence in our industry and to making a lasting impact on the lives of countless individuals," said APTA President and CEO Paul P. Skoutelas. "Congratulations to all who have been recognized for their accomplishments and for making positive impacts in their communities and our industry."

APTA is revered in the transit industry for its advocacy, workforce development programs, educational conferences and committees which advance key initiatives that affect transportation agencies.

To learn more about SunLine Transit Agency, visit SunLine.org.

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About SunLine Transit Agency

SunLine provides public transit services in California's Coachella Valley spanning 1,120 mile-service area and carrying approximately 4.2 million riders. It has pioneered zero-emission bus deployments, particularly for hydrogen fuel cell electric buses (FCEB). In 1993, SunLine's Board adopted a voluntary policy of pursuing alternative fuel solutions that provide the lowest possible emissions, which led to SunLine becoming the first transit agency in the state to convert its entire fleet to compressed natural gas (CNG). SunLine is committed to transitioning its entire bus fleet to zero-emission by 2035. To learn more about SunLine Transit Agency's services and policies, go to SunLine.org.